

Please don't relax the current restrictions on broadcast station ownership. I think the last several years have shown the problems of concentration of ownership in the hands of a few large corporations. I watch a great deal of news on TV and its amazing how homogenous, repetitive and uninformative it has become. To get anything like a truly non-mainstream point of view you pretty much need to read small, independent media (which are being bought out and/or choked out of markets by the overwhelming dominance and deep pockets of corporate-owned media). In fact, some of the best news coverage is to be found outside the US, in the British and Canadian media. Its a pitiful state of affairs when an American citizen has to get his news from the foreign press because the domestic media is so bad. The conflicts of interest (covering a company that's part of the corporation that owns you), the lack of a local perspective (since your programming comes from some out of town or out of state "central HQ") and the lack of diversity of viewpoints inherent in a limited number of media owners makes for a poor information environment. You also have the large overhead that accompanies a company that gets too big - the pressures to get ratings and advertising becomes much larger and the ability to cover controversial topics or present diverse viewpoints becomes lessened due to the constraints of keeping such a large operation running. Small, independent media can take chances, try new things, offer more diverse viewpoints that large corporate media can't or won't. Without this diversity our democracy suffers. The revelation that over half the American public believed that Saddam Hussein was somehow involved in the 9/11 attacks shows how pitifully ill-informed we are.

Please reconsider relaxing the rules on broadcast ownership. Our democracy is already at a low tide, in my opinion largely due to a lack of involvement which is due to a lack of awareness of information that really matters (ratings pressure tends to push spectacle over substance). Further concentration of broadcast ownership can only worsen this already alarming trend.